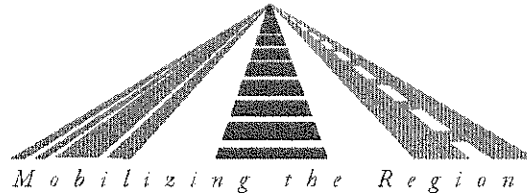


## TRI-STATE TRANSPORTATION CAMPAIGN



**Testimony of Steven Higashide, Senior Planner/Connecticut Coordinator**  
**RE: Governor's Proposed Budget (Transportation)**  
**Connecticut General Assembly, Appropriations Committee Public Hearing**  
**February 22, 2013**

Good evening. My name is Steven Higashide and I am the senior planner and Connecticut coordinator for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a nonprofit transportation watchdog group that works in Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Governor's proposed budget.

We note that the proposed budget:

- Reduces the state subsidy for bus service by increasing bus fares to \$1.50, effective January 1, 2014. This reduction in the state subsidy and increase in fares will also affect ADA paratransit fares, effective January 1, 2014.
- Eliminates the state funding for the non-ADA Dial-A-Ride Program by \$576,361.
- Eliminates \$3.1 million in DSS funding for the Transportation Employment Independence Program (TEIP).

We oppose the Governor's proposed reductions for the following reasons:

1. An increase in fares and a reduction in the state subsidy will impact the most vulnerable users of transit by either costing them more money or reducing needed services.
2. The reduction in funding for the non-ADA Dial-A-Ride program will also impact the system's most vulnerable users.
3. The elimination of DSS TEIP funding will greatly affect the ability of residents to get to jobs.

In the New Haven, Hartford, Stamford, Bridgeport, and Norwalk areas, 38% of households that make less than \$20,000 annually do not own a vehicle, according to data from the U.S. Census. It's ironic that in the same budget that the governor proposes a near-total elimination of the property tax on automobiles, he also proposes these transit reductions. This doesn't seem to be truly progressive transportation policy.

The budget also appears to represent a sweep of approximately \$75 million from the Special Transportation Fund (STF). Though the governor's budget proposes dedicating more of the oil companies tax to the STF – a positive move – it would transfer a larger amount of STF monies to the general fund, resulting in a net reduction of funds. Such sweeps reduce public confidence that transportation revenue will be used for transportation improvements.